The Impact of Cash Transfers on the Mental Health and Intra-Household Decision Making of Syrian Refugee Households in Lebanon

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- This paper: understanding intra-household and mental health outcomes rather than
  behavioral effects.

Contributions

1. Clearing some grey literature on impact evaluations of cash transfer programs where most are conducted either internally or by commissioned external consultants.

2. Providing a different angle on intra-household effects where evidence is unclear whether cash improves women bargaining power within the household.
   E.g. De Brauw *et al.* (2014) and Hidrobo *et al.* (2012)

Background

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- Over a 12-month cycle, eligible households receive a monthly unconditional and unrestricted direct cash transfer of approximately $175* per household.

Data

- Household survey collected by Salti *et al.* (2022) on July/August 2019.

- Data includes information on beneficiaries for two MCAP cycles - November 2017 and November 2018.

- Covers Mount Lebanon, North Lebanon, and Bekaa which composed 85% of all Syrian refugees residing in Lebanon during the study period.

Outcomes of Interest - Decision Making

Decision Making – To be asked to female respondents ONLY		
	R01	R02
Read: within a household, there are various decisions to make about different issues including work, children, how to spend money as well as personal issues. The next set of questions is about this topic. If household does not engage in that particular activity, enter code for "Decision not made" and proceed to next activity.	In the last 6 months, who in your household generally had the last word in the decision? Code 1	If R0a/b/c/d/e/f/g/h1!=2 In the last 6 months, to what extent did you feel you could make your own personal decisions regarding these aspects of household life if you want(ed) to? 1. Not at all 2. Small extent 3. Medium extent 4. To a high extent
a. About if you should work to earn money or not and the acceptable wage?		
b. About what to prepare for daily meals?		
c. About visiting family/relatives or friends?		
d. About major household expenditures? (Such as a large appliance for the house like a refrigerator)		
e. About minor household expenditures? (Such as food for daily consumption or other household needs like toiletries)		
f. About whether or not to use family planning (contraceptives/birth control) to space or limit births?		
g. About the education of your children		
h. About where to obtain health care/advice?		
R03 For Enumerator: were there other household members aside from the woman present during these questions?		Code 2

Code 1: Decision Making		Code 2: Presence of others	
1	Mainly husband	1	Woman was alone
2	Mainly wife	2	Spouse/ partner was present
3	Mainly both husband and wife jointly	3	Other household members were present
40	Husband/male with another person	4	Woman was with toddlers
50	Wife/female with another person	5	Spouse/ partner and the household members were present
8	Someone outside the household/other	88	Don't know
9	Decision not made/Not Applicable	99	Refuse to answer
88	Don't know		
99	Refuse to answer		

Outcomes of Interest - Mental Health Inventory (MHI-5)

	HEA: Mental Health								
Now I am going to ask you a few questions about your own health, wellbeing and interactions with others.									
		Very Good	Good	Half/Half	Not Good	Not Good At All	Don't Know	Refuse to Answer	
SRH	How do you perceive your current health?	1	2	3	4	5	88	99	
		All the time	Most of the time	A lot of the time	Some of the time	Little of the time	Never	Don't know	Refuse to answer
HEA22	In the past six months, how much of the time did you feel that you are a happy person?	1	2	3	4	5	6	88	99
HEA23	In the past six months, how much of the time did you feel calm and reassured?	1	2	3	4	5	6	88	99
HEA24	In the past six months, how much of the time were you very angry?	1	2	3	4	5	6	88	99
HEA25	In the past six months, how much of the time did you feel upset?	1	2	3	4	5	6	88	99
HEA26	In the past six months, how much of the time did you feel depressed and there was no way to be happy?	1	2	3	4	5	6	88	99

Descriptive Statistics

	Total	Treated	Not treated
2018 Score	58.35	54.47	62.76
Treatment Status	0.53	1.00	0.00
Household Size	5.84	6.25	5.37
Dependency Ratio	1.49	1.64	1.32
%HHmm never attended school	0.35	0.35	0.35
Female HoH	0.23	0.24	0.22
Bekaa	0.68	0.65	0.70
North	0.21	0.23	0.19
Mount Lebanon	0.11	0.11	0.11
	N=3132	N=1667	N=1465

Methodology

- **Fuzzy Regression Discontinuity Design:** Crossover shows PMT score is not deterministic.

- Households on either side of the cut-off are arguably similar.

- Any difference in outcomes can be attributed to the causal impact of MCAP.

MCAP status based on eligibility
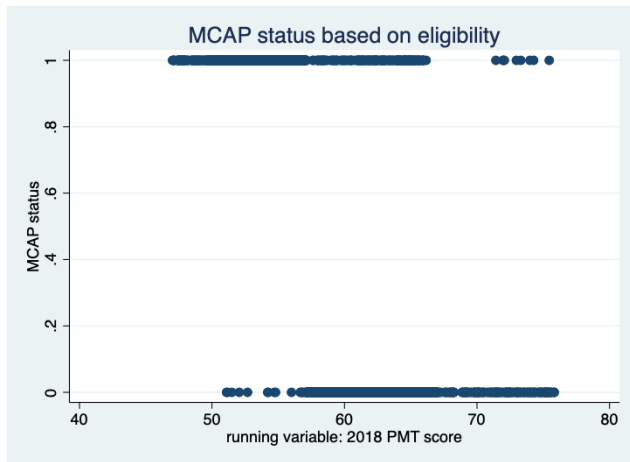
Specification

First-stage regression:

$$D_i = \delta_0 + \delta_1 T_i + g_i(x - c) + u_i \tag{1}$$

Second-stage regression:

$$Y_i = \alpha + \tau D_i + f_i(x - c) + \epsilon_i \tag{2}$$

- where D_i is a dummy for receiving MCAP for household i,
- T_i is the instrumental variable dummy indicating whether or not the PMT score threshold c has been crossed,
- Note that a polynomial regression and a local linear regression approach will be used for the function forms of g(x - c) and f(x - c).

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7. No manipulation in neighborhood of discontinuity - the information is unpublicized and the PMT calculation is updated yearly.

McCrary Density Test
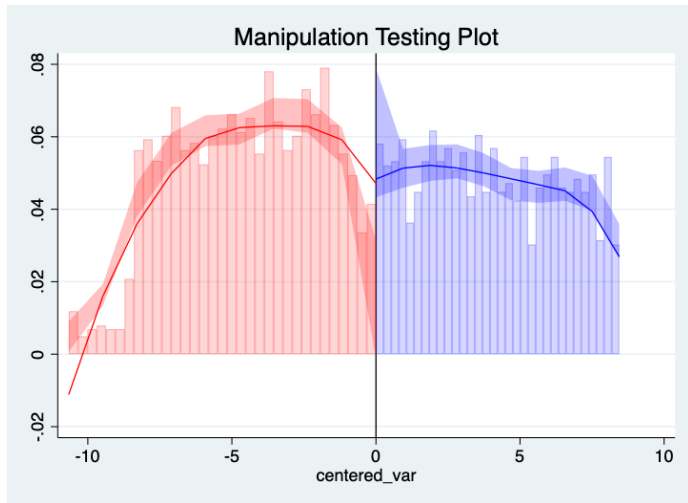
To-Do List

Activity	Week of						
	13-Jun	**20-Jun**	**27-Jun**	**04-Jul**	**11-Jul**	**18-Jul**	**25-Jul**
Presenting and updating based on feedback received	▓	▓					
Data cleaning and weights generation	▓	▓					
Writing up literature review		▓	▓				
Running analysis and robustness checks			▓	▓	▓		
Finalizing key findings					▓	▓	▓
Writing up abstract, introduction, limitations, and conclusion						▓	▓
Reviewing and submitting final report							▓

References

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